(c) the reasons for not percolating these benefits down to the common consumers in the country;

(d) whether Government would consider to formulate a new oil pricing policy to safeguard the interest of the consumers in the country; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA J. PATEL): (a) to (c) With the declared intention of moving towards market determined pricing for petroleum products, the Government on1.4.2002 announced dismantling of Administered Pricing Mechanism. Effective 1.4.2002, retail selling prices of products except subsidized products are fixed on import parity basis by the marketing companies. However, since end 2003, there has been an unprecedented and spiraling increase in international oil prices and Oil companies have been modulating the price of petrol and diesel also in addition to maintaining the prices of subsidized domestic LPG and PDS kerosene. In consequence they have been suffering huge under-recoveries on sale of these products.

(d) and (e) With a view to devise a long term strategy for pricing of petroleum products, the Government had constituted an Inter-Ministerial Committee under the Chairmanship of Dr. C. Rangarajan, Chairman, Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister to examine different aspects of pricing and taxation of petroleum products with a view to stablizing/rationalizing their prices. The Committee submitted its report on 17.2.2006. The report is under examination of the Government.

Expenditure on advertisement by ONGC

2342. PROF. P.J. KURIAN: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURALGAS be pleased to state:

(a) the total advertisements given by ONGC in 2005-06 to newspapers, magazines, TV channels and all other media, giving separate figures for the print and visual media;

(b) what is the purpose of ONGC giving advertisements;

(c) whether ONGC has any plans to increase its advertisements in the coming year; and

(d) the reasons for such expenditure by ONGC?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA J. PATEL): (a) ONGC has incurred an expenditure of Rs. 19.12 crores (unaudited accounts) on advertisements during 2005-06. ONGC has no separate accounting for advertisements being given to the print and visual media.

(b) ONGC has to release various types of advertisements as a part of business activity and statutory requirements, including communication to Stockholders and Corporate image building, from time to time.

(c) and (d) The expenditure incurred on advertisements by ONGC is based on business activity and statutory advertisements, and therefore, it varies from year to year.

Fire at oil storage depots

2343. SHRI N.R. GOVINDARAJAR: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the incidents of fire in storage and distribution of petroleum products happened in each oil companies during the last three years;

(b) the losses suffered by each company as a result thereof;

(c) whether Government have asked the public sector oil companies to take necessary steps to prevent the incidents of fire in storage distribution of petroleum products; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA J. PATEL): (a) and (b) Public sector Oil Marketing Company-wise details of incidents of fire in storage and distribution of petroleum products during the years 2002-03, 2003-04 and 2004-05 and losses suffered by each company are at Annexure as Statement. (*See* below)

(c) to (d) Yes, Sir. The Government has issued various statutory regulations i.e. Petroleum Rules, 2002, Gas Cylinder Rules, 2004,Static and Mobile Pressure Vessels (Unfired) Rules, 1981, Factory Rules, 1987, etc. for compliance by public sector Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) to reduce the fire incidents. Compliance of these norms by OMCs is monitored/checked by statutory bodes like Petroleum and Explosive Safety Organization (Formerly Department of Explosives), Factory Inspectorates, etc.